



The Minister

H.E. Mr. Néstor Osorio
President of the UN Security Council
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations

8 April 2011

Mr President, Your Excellency,

The Government of Somaliland welcomes the debate of the United Nations Security Council on piracy off the coast of Somalia, and the January 2011 report of Jack Lang, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Legal Issues Related to Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (S/2011/1/20) which addresses counter-piracy measures. I would like to contribute to this discussion by setting out the position of the Somaliland Government. Somaliland is eager to continue to work with the international community to find a solution to the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia, but we require more resources and increased political support in order to do so more effectively.

The use of Somalia as a base for operations by pirates – the consequence of the breakdown of the central Government – has given the crisis in Somalia an international dimension that stretches far beyond its shores. Pirate attacks not only affect ship owners and insurance companies, they also drive up the cost of international trade and divert resources of many navies which must send ships to the Indian Ocean in order to deter attacks. The proceeds from piracy help to perpetuate instability in south central Somalia, and finally, pirate attacks affect seafarers, who face an increased risk of being held to ransom or suffering violence at the hands of pirate gangs.

My Government recognizes these evils and is keen to bolster the role it plays in combating them. Already, through a comprehensive set of national laws and enforcement structures we prohibit pirate use of our territory to launch their attacks, and our waters are largely free from pirate attacks. Using the same legal avenues, we arrest and prosecute pirates when we catch them: there are currently nearly 90 pirates in gaol in Hargeisa. This is not however a prison specifically for pirates as some media sources have claimed.

We also cooperate with regional and international organizations by participating in Working Group 2 of the International Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia and the Kampala

Annex A to Letter from Foreign Minister Omar to H.E. Néstor Osorio

The following is a list of equipment and assistance required by the Somaliland Coastguard in order to enable it to play an effective role in counter piracy activities.

Boats

14 high speed boats of 15-20m length to cover the Zeila, Berbera and Eastern sectors of the coast.

Spares for the above.

10 small speed boats with outboard engines for inshore work.

Spare outboard engines.

3 X 30 ton fishing boats for patrol work and associated spares.

Assistance with setting up repair and maintenance facilities for the patrol boats

Up to 3 centres are needed, with the ability to overhaul boats, engines and ancillary equipment including radios.

Uniforms

Uniforms for 1500 Coastguards, including 50 officers.

Construction or rehabilitation of Coastguard buildings

Includes sleeping quarters, dining halls and offices.

Assistance with establishing a Coastguard Training College

The College should have a capacity for 200 recruits.

Assistance with recruiting and training 1500 Coastguard officers

This would include paying wages for one year. The training would include anti-piracy and coastal surveillance, and anti smuggling operations. Training in the use of weapons and radios would be covered.

process, which is led by UNPOS and brings together representatives from Somaliland, Puntland and the Transitional Federal Government to discuss ways of dealing with this menace.

Given more resources, we could do more to help. For example we need more resources for our Coastguard, including boats, so that we can patrol our territorial waters more effectively. I attach a list of items and assistance which the Somaliland Coastguard urgently needs in its struggle against piracy (Annex A). Meanwhile we are grateful for the help which we already get in the Security Sector. But resources alone won't solve these problems.

I must be clear, too, that Somaliland does not wish to become a prison for Somali pirates arrested on the high seas or in other countries. To permit this would be to court reprisals from the clans from which those Somalis come. That in turn would threaten the hard-won stability of Somaliland and also our prized democracy. But we will continue to arrest pirates who break Somaliland laws and collaborate more broadly in international efforts to curb this threat.

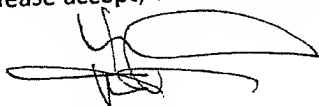
I should also mention Somaliland's wider needs, fulfilling which will help us serve as a more effective partner in the fight against piracy and terrorism. These are related to the root causes of terrorism and illustrate the critical link between development and security. As I noted in my letter dated 9 March to H.E. Ambassador Li Baodung, Somaliland requires more development assistance in the areas of health, education, governance, and infrastructure, including water. We would hope that this would take the form of direct bilateral aid, rather than multilateral assistance. We also want help with diversifying our exports and with promoting foreign direct investment. If we can create alternative livelihoods we can reduce the possibility that our young people will be attracted to joining pirate groups or Al Shabaab.

Beyond such technical assistance, Somaliland needs broader international political support and engagement to maintain and propagate our success. At the moment, the international community's neglect of Somaliland in its discussions about Somalia has the effect of penalizing us for successfully establishing democracy and peace. Instead, we should be supported, including by more explicit political declarations, including from the Security Council, acknowledging our existence and contributions to regional peace and security.

I look forward to continuing to engage on these and other issues.

I would be most grateful if Your Excellency would circulate this letter to all Security Council members.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration,



Mohamed Omar
Foreign Minister
Republic of Somaliland